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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Letter dated 15 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit to you the explanation of vote of Brazil regarding the question of Western Sahara, under item 39 of the agenda of the General Assembly, on which the plenary took action on 14 December (see annex).

According to decision 34/401, paragraph 7 (annex VI to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly), delegations that have made an explanation of vote in the Committee should not repeat it in the plenary. However, in view of the fact that the contents of Brazil's earlier explanation of vote has been altered to include new elements, I wish to request that you circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ronaldo Mota **Sardenberg**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 15 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Brazil has abstained on the draft resolution regarding the question of Western Sahara. It regrets the lack of consensus on the text of the draft resolution, after decades of debate and consultations in the United Nations. Brazil understands that resorting to a vote does not reflect the spirit that must guide the peace process and does not contribute to the achievement of a mutually acceptable solution to the question of Western Sahara.

Brazil reaffirms its commitment to the process of decolonization, of which the question of Western Sahara is an unresolved and protracted issue. It is necessary to reaffirm the full validity of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and all related resolutions to regulate the question of Western Sahara, in order to ensure that the Saharawi people exercise their right to self-determination. Developments that have occurred in the area over the years have not changed the status of the question of Western Sahara as an item of decolonization.

Though we recognize that self-determination can be expressed in various forms in different contexts, Brazil believes the core principle of the right to self-determination must be the guiding element in any deliberation on this issue.

Brazil reiterates its support for the peace plan, as recognized by Security Council resolutions 1495 (2003) and 1541 (2004). Brazil acknowledges the responsibility of the United Nations towards the people of Western Sahara; supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and his role in the peace process; supports the principle of right to self-determination of the Saharawi people; and wishes that a solution that is mutually acceptable for the parties will be achieved.

A lasting and peaceful solution of the question of Western Sahara demands an immediate resumption of negotiations between the parties, with the political will necessary to find a mutually acceptable solution. The United Nations also bears a significant responsibility in supporting the settlement of the issue, which falls within its competencies as defined in the Charter.

Brazil wishes to underline the important role to be played by the Secretary-General, as an initiator of proposals to encourage negotiations — as reaffirmed in his recent report on the subject dated 16 October 2006 (S/2006/817). Brazil trusts that the Secretary-General will enhance his efforts to promote a final settlement for the dispute, in accordance with the legal framework established to deal with cases of self-determination, and the question of Western Sahara in particular.

Brazil's abstention should be interpreted as a vote of confidence in the future of the peace process, which we believe should be carried on in a manner that produces positive results.